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The last great American whale
Some say they saw him at the Great Lakes
Some say they saw him off Florida
My mother said she saw him in Chinatown
But you can't always trust your mother
by Lou Reed (1989)

BEHEMOTH

Loch Ness: According to a report in the IWZ (Stuttgart), July 28, p.3 a German journalist, Karl-Ernst Jipp, has collected all Nessie stories and publications of the last 30 years and has now published his own book, "Nessie - Das Rätsel von Loch Ness". The book **deals** with the theories that Nessie is a plesiosaur, a giant eel, an optical illusion or a hallucination. The author, it is said, did his research in files and libraries and wrote a competent story of the modern search. Sounds good, but so far the book has not appeared in the catalogue of books in print. - I have two notes on new expeditions to Loch Ness: According to "Tauchen", July 1990, a London bookmaker has put a price of 700,000 Pounds on Nessie's head. Bookmaker William Hunt has invited participants in the hunt to start their search in October. A similar story in the Berlin "taz" of Sept., 5, p.9, tells of a Paris enterprise who put a price of 250,000 Pound on the proof that Nessie exists. "taz" says that on October 5, several researchers with sophisticated technology will be at the Loch... - The "CENAP Report" (Sept. 90, p.10) quotes a news story about the British tabloid Sunday Sport. One of the Sport stories was that the Loch Ness Monster is actually a Nazi-U-Boat with a crew of aged Nazis which had entered the Loch during WW II. The paper even printed a photo of the Loch complete with a sub allegedly taken by an American tourist. This all reminds me of an article in the German "UFO-Nachrichten" (Wiesbaden, Nr. 196, Dec 1972, p. 1 + 2) by Ilse von Jacobi, who tried to show that the monster is a flying saucer powered by an electro-magnetic drive (She quoted Holidays books on the "evasive" monster as evidence). - Some Bilks ago, I had notes about the alleged prophesy of the Brahan Seer who said that when the monster was caught, Inverness would be destroyed by fire and water. This, of course, was a 20th century invention, which I was able to trace back to a 1984 account in a Scottish newspaper (credit due to Andreas Trottmann). Now Fortean Times have published their reprint of FTs 26 - 30, and in issue 30 (1979), p.30, appears an even earlier version of the fake prophesy: according to a "New Civil Engineer"/ Spotlight 12 1979, the Brahan Seer foretold that "when the Ness River is overbuilt nine times... a powerful sea monster will appear." Does anybody know of still earlier or different versions?

Lake Erie, USA: According to a AP report in the "Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung" (Okt 1, p.13) a lake monster myth is forming around one of America's Great Lakes. There had been isolated reports in 1985 and 1987, then, on September 4, Harold Bricker, his wife and his son were on an angling trip on the lake, when only 300 yards from their boat, a gigantic creature surfaced. It was black in colour, about 11 metres (37ft) in length, had a snake's head and moved as quickly as his boat. After the Bricker's story had reached the papers, 5 new witnesses came and told how, on 3 occasions, they had seen the same thing. A local fireman, a 50-year old Pennsylvania lady, who usually spends her holiday at the lake, and others reported their sightings to the editor of a Port Clinton newspaper, who had a toll-free phone-line installed for witnesses. He had also started a competition to find a name for the thing, and finally christened it South Bay Besse. Thomas Solberg, who owns a pier at Lake Erie, has put a price of 5000 \$ on the monster's head - the creature is still not under official protection. Meanwhile, the small harbour town has erected signs on the lake shore: "Future home of the lake serpent":

Fürth, Germany: The story of Elsbeth, a pygmy hippopotamus that had escaped from a circus and spend a week in the Rednitz River even reached London's "Times" (Sept 1, p.16). In my sources (three accounts by dpa and AP in the "Sonntag Aktuell", Aug 26, p.8; and "Rheinpfalz", Aug 28 and 31) the hyppo is first called a "river monster". Regularly observed by tourists and policemen on the hunt, Elsbeth managed to avoid its captors for a week in the Pegnitz and Regnitz Rivers. The hippo was spotted by sightseers while eating grass on the river banks, but the pig-sized creature had always escaped when policemen and firemen arrived to return it to the zoo. On Aug 30, Elsbeth's time of independence ended when it was caught by a crew of policemen and 10 helpers under the watchful eyes of TV cameras.

Mixed Bag: - The discovery of an unknown, 3 ft monitor lizard in Yemen via a TV documentary on Yemen wildlife, see "Gong", 1. - 7-Sept 1990, p.10.

- At the same time that Elsbeth made news, a traffic warning on Sept 6 warned drivers to beware of crocodiles running wild on the Autobahn between Esslingen and Stuttgart, Germany. "Police here explained yesterday that the warning had leaked out during a training session at the traffic center for a new colleague who was getting instruction on a computer" (Arab News, Sept 8, p.16; also Rheinpfalz, Sept 7.)

- A 1.50 m / 5 ft giant pike weighing 40 pounds is the official monster of a gravel pit at Schwansen near Eckernförde, Germany. Though many divers claim that they've seen the monster, no-one has ever produced any evidence ("Tauchen", Sept 1990, p.11).

- In a "Rheinpfalz" report on the "Fake" exhibition of the British Museum in London, there is a nice picture of the "fur trout", a fish that is coated in fur because of the coldness of the water in which it swims. The fake stems from the 17th century (Aug 18).

ISIS

Conil, Spain: According to a report by Jose Ruesga Montiel: Voronezh y Conil, Cuadernos de Ufologia 2:8, May 1990: 90 - 94, several young witnesses observed 3 humanoid creatures come out of the sea at Conil on September 29, 1989. They thought they'd come from a UFO. Ruesga shows they were only normal bathers, and were mistaken for extraterrestrial only after all the Voronesh excitement.

USO

Book: A new book by Charles Berlitz: Das Drachen-Dreieck, has been published by Droemer Knaur, Munich. The book deals with the devil Sea off Japan, which allegedly is a kind of Bermuda Triangle. The book includes stories of ships which disappeared without trail, the usual UFO reports and several sea serpent stories, all taken from Heuvelmans. There is hardly any referencing, though.

MARINE LIFE

Whales: - Since July 9, a killer whale lives in Randers Harbour, Denmark (Süddeutsche Zeitung, Aug 3, p.48). - a mass stranding of 60 pilot whales at Cheticamp, Nova Scotia, Canada, and the attempts to save some of them: Süddeutsche Zeitung, Aug 13, p.8a, Arab News, Aug 13, p.16, Rheinpfalz and Rhein-Zeitung, Aug 11; and The London Times Aug 11, p.8.

Sharks: - 7 m / 23 ft basking shark caught off Capo Isola d'Elba, Italy ("Tauchen" Sept 1990, p.10). - A 3.8 m / 12 ft white shark caught by brother Pete and John Busalacchi off San Diego, California (Rheinpfalz, Sept 8., Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung, Sept 8, p.17, Mannheimer Morgen, Sept 8, p.10.) - And they strike back! California shark attacks bather (Saudi Gazette, Sept. 12)

- Leatherback turtles use magnetism to navigate - Observer May 27, p.14, and several scientific magazines.

...AND...

The original Indian name for Lake Char, Massachusetts, is Chagogogagogmanchaggagoggchaubunagungamaugg, which, roughly translated, means. "I fish on my side, you fish on your side and nobody fishes in the middle" - see Saudi Gazette, Sept 4, p.16 and International Herald Tribune, Sept 19, p. 3c.